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April 8, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Associate Deputy Director for Intelligence
THROUGH : Coordinator for Academic Relations/DDI
SUBJECT : Agency Participation in Academic Conferences

I attended the annual conference of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) from March 23-26 in San Francisco, and I found it worthwhile to hear what people from the academic community had to say about developments in South Asia. I believe, however, that the value to the Agency of having analysts attend such conferences would be enhanced if we were to start taking a more active role in the proceedings.

More specifically, I believe there would be merit in establishing a policy of having Agency participants in conferences like this contact the organizers well in advance and offer to give talks, or orally present papers, at one or more of the panels or symposia that comprise the conference. This year's AAS conference consisted of some 66 such symposia in which papers or talks were given by scholars on a wide variety of South Asian and East Asian political, economic, historical, sociological and cultural topics.

As matters now stand, at least at the AAS conference, the profile of the CIA and other participating USG agencies (State/INR and DIA) is so low as to be almost invisible. At the AAS conferences, which Agency and other USG personnel have been attending for a number of years, we wear badges giving our name and organization, but in fact our presence seems to be noticed by relatively few of the thousand or more attendees. If a primary reason for having us attend these conferences is the public relations value to the Agency, I think we should become active participants.

Our participation could take any of a number of forms,

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depending on our preferences and those of the AAS organizers. For example, we could present a symposium of our own, join with other USG participants to present a USG symposium, and/or participate jointly with academic participants in a mixed symposium.

Someone from this Branch attends the AAS conference every year. Members of this branch along with other participating Agency components could contact the AAS people in advance of next year's conference and try to arrange to take an active role.

I think the AAS people who organize these annual conferences could prove receptive to the idea of CIA/USG participation in a symposium or two. They might see this as a way to enliven the conference. From the Agency's standpoint, our participants would probably have to put up with a certain amount of verbal flak from some of the less friendly conference attendees, but the Agency would gain by showing the assembled scholars that CIA people are (1) human and (2) capable of giving an interesting and informative presentation. At the AAS, I am fairly certain, our presentations would be among the best at the conference.



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OCI/MEA/SOA

cc: Coordinator for Academic Relations/OCI
Executive Officer/OCI
Chief, OCI Administrative Staff

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